

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

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R 071605Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6512

INFO USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 03368

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CH, PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: PRELIMINARY FRENCH VIEWS CONCERNING RECENT
EVENTS IN PRC

REF: PEKING 200

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE QUAI'S PRINCIPAL CHINA-WATCHER,
ROGER DUZER, VIEWED THE RECENT EVENTS IN CHINA AS BEING
FAIRLY ACCURATELY DESCRIBED BY THE TIME TITLE: "A
VICTORY FOR CHOU AND MODERATION." HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT
REASONABLE AND MODERATE ORGANIZATIONS AND POLICIES HAD
NOT ALWAYS BEEN LONG-LIVED IN THE PRC'S HISTORY. INDICA-
TORS OF POSSIBLE INSTABILITY ARE: MAO'S ABSENCE AND
CHOU'S TOO OBVIOUSLY CENTRAL ROLE; AN UNNATURAL CONCEN-
TRATION OF PARTY, GOVERNMENT, AND MILITARY POSITIONS IN
THE HANDS OF TENG, ONLY RECENTLY REHABILITATED; THE
AMBIGUOUS ROLE OF CHANG CH'UN-CH'IAO WHO RECEIVED
POSITIONS PARALLELING THOSE OF TENG. IN SUM, SAID
DUZER, THE RESULTS GIVE GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM CONCERNING
CHINA'S INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOREIGN RELATIONS, BUT
GROUNDS FOR UNPREDICTABILITY REMAIN. END SUMMARY

1. IN A PERIODIC TOUR D'HORIZON OF NORTH ASIAN AFFAIRS
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ON FEBRUARY 5, QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ASIA DUZER GAVE

EMBOFF HIS PRELIMINARY VIEWS OF RECENT EVENTS IN CHINA. HE NOTED THAT FRENCH AMBASSADOR MANACH (WHO RETURNED TO PARIS FEBRUARY 6) HAD REPORTED TELEGRAPHICALLY HIS VIEWS INCLUDING HIS FAREWELL CALL ON TENG HSIAO-P'ING, BUT MANACH'S ORAL DEBRIEFING MIGHT ALTER DUZER'S CURRENT VIEWS.

2. POSITION OF CHOU AND ROLE OF MAO. DUZER THOUGHT THAT RECENT PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS REPRESENTED A CLEAR VICTORY FOR CHOU EN-LAI. BY CONTRAST MAO HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT ECLIPSED. ALTHOUGH THE CONSTITUTION REFERRED TO MAO'S THOUGHT AND THE PRESENCE OF HIS PHOTOGRAPH IMPLIED DECISIONS WERE REACHED UNDER HIS SHADOW, HIS ABSENCE FROM THE CONGRESS WAS MORE ELOQUENT. THE CONTRAST WITH THE LAST CONGRESS WHEN MAO WAS CONSTANTLY REPORTED AS SEEING VARIOUS PARTY, GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY OFFICIALS FROM THE PROVINCES WERE STRIKING. EVEN IF MAO ACQUIESCED IN THIS TREATMENT, IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT CHOU WAS CLEARLY THE CENTRAL FIGURE. THE LIST OF SIGNIFICANT PERSONNEL CHANGES IN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT CLEARLY REFLECTED THE PREEMINENCE OF CHOU AND HIS PROTEGE TENG HSIAO-P'ING. THE "OPPOSITION" CLEARLY LOST GROUND SINCE THE ONLY ONE EVER ASSOCIATED WITH THE GROUP WHO EMERGED WITH POWERFUL PARTY/GOVERNMENT/MILITARY POSITIONS WAS CHANG CH'UN-CH'IAO, WHOSE CURRENT CREDENTIALS ARE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE.

3. ROLE OF TENG HSIAO-P'ING. DUZER THOUGHT THAT THE COMBINATION OF PARTY (NOT ONLY VICE CHAIRMAN, BUT ALSO APPARENTLY VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMISSION OF THE CCP-CC), GOVERNMENTAL (FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) AND MILITARY (CHIEF OF STAFF) ROLES MARKED TENG AS THE LEADING FIGURE UNDER MAO AND CHOU AND HINTED AT HIS BEING AT LEAST CHOU'S CHOICE AS SUCCESSOR. DUZER CONSIDERED SUCH A CONCENTRATION OF POWERFUL POSITIONS UNDER ONE MAN TO BE UNUSUAL AT THIS TIME AND LIKELY TO MAKE TENG THE LIGHTENING ROD FOR OPPOSITION TO CHOU'S POLICIES. DUZER WAS THEREFORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE BASIC STABILITY OF TENG'S POSITION AND HENCE OF CHOU'S SYSTEM. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE SAID THAT TENG HAD SPOKEN TO MANACH QUITE MATTER-OF-FACTLY ABOUT HIS MAY TRIP TO FRANCE, INDICATING HE THOUGHT HIS POSITION SECURE AND THAT ONE COULD PREDICT THAT BOTH MAO AND CHOU'S HEALTH WOULD PERMIT HIM TO BE ABSENT.

4. ROLE OF CHANG CH'UN-CH'IAO. DUZER THOUGHT THAT THERE WERE TWO CURIOUS ASPECTS OF CHANG'S NEW ROLE:

(A) CHANG WAS THE ONLY ONE OF THE SHANGHAI GROUP WHO
OBTAINED IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY POSITIONS --
IN ADDITION TO HIS PARTY ROLE. (B) CHANG APPEARED TO BE
PROVIDED WITH A ROLE ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS IMPORTANT THAN

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THAT OF TENG, IN GENERAL HIS POSITIONS WERE PAIRED WITH
THOSE OF TENG TO PERMIT HIM TO FOLLOW -- AND POSSIBLY TO
HINDER -- TENG'S ACTIVITIES. THE QUESTION AROSE AS TO
WHETHER CHANG WAS "BOUGHT OFF" -- DETACHED FROM THE
OTHERS IN THE SHANGHAI GROUP BY THE OFFER OF POSITIONS
RANKING RIGHT AFTER THOSE OF TENG OR WHETHER CHANG WAS
THE FULL EMISSARY OF THE OTHERS IN THE SHANGHAI GROUP.
IN THE LATTER CASE, WHICH DUZER CONSIDERED LIKELY, THE
VICTORY WOULD BE LESS COMPLETE FOR THE CHOU GROUP, AND
THE POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING THE DISPUTE -- PARTICULARLY
WITH THE DEATH OF CHOU -- GREATLY INCREASED.

5. ELEMENTS OF INSTABILITY. AS NOTED IN PARAGRAPHS 3
AND 4, DUZER BELIEVES THAT CHOU HAS RIGGED UP A FRAME-
WORK FOR STABILITY, BUT THAT OPPOSITION WITHIN THE
PARTY IS NOT CRUSHED. DESPITE THE IMPOSITION OF CHOU'S

SLATE, OPPONENTS REMAIN IN SOME FAIRLY PRESTIGIOUS POSITIONS. WHETHER THEY, LIKE SOME OF THE AGED VETERANS SUCH AS CHU TEH, TUNG PI-WU REMAIN MERELY FOR WINDOW DRESSING, DUZER THINKS IT TOO EARLY TO KNOW. DUZER NOTED THAT IF THE CHOU SOLUTION WERE NOT TOTALLY SUPPORTED BY MAO, CONSIDERABLE CHANGES COULD OCCUR IF
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CHOU PREDECEASED MAO. DUZER HAD THEREFORE BEEN STRUCK BY THE REMARK OF A CHINESE DIPLOMAT THAT CHOU'S HEALTH WAS WORSE THAN THAT OF MAO -- NOT BY THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REMARK, BUT THAT A CHINESE DIPLOMAT WOULD APPARENTLY BE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM PEKING TO MAKE IT. DUZER THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT WHILE RECENT EVENTS SEEMED TO ASSURE MODERATE POLICIES FOR THE NEAR FUTURE AND TO ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR A PEACEFUL AND SMOOTH TRANSITION FOLLOWING THE DEMISE OF MAO AND CHOU, IT WAS OFTEN SUCH ORDERLY ARRANGEMENTS WHICH ATTRACTED A COUNTER-ACTION AS PART OF THE "CONTINUING REVOLUTION".

6. PRC FOREIGN POLICY. DUZER THOUGHT THERE WAS LITTLE NEW IN CHOU'S REPORT TO THE CONGRESS ON GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. FOREIGN POLICY WOULD APPARENTLY CONTINUE ALONG THE LINES IDENTIFIED WITH CHOU. HOWEVER, DUZER WAS STRUCK BY CHOU'S SUGGESTION OF SMALL, PRACTICAL STEPS WHICH COULD BE TAKEN IN RELATIONS WITH THE USSR. THIS SEEMED TO BE A RETURN TO THE LESS SHRILL APPROACH OF 1969. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. SEEMED TO IMPLY CHOU IS NOW LESS CONCERNED WITH GREATER SPEED IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS IN THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE, REFLECTING, DUZER THOUGHT, AN ACCEPTANCE OF THE SLOW U.S. REDUCTION IN ITS INVOLVEMENT IN TAIWAN.

7. COMMENT: DUZER SUGGESTED A FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION AFTER HE HAS HAD A CHANCE TO DEBRIEF MANAC'H; WE WOULD APPRECIATE COPIES OF MATERIALS CONCERNING U.S. VIEWS TO DRAW ON IN DIALOGUE.
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